

REMARKS

The Office Action of September 28, 2006 and the references cited therein have been carefully considered. The withdrawal of claims 23-25 from further consideration in this application has been noted.

In this Amendment, the application has been amended to correct minor informalities and the claims have been amended to overcome the Examiner's formal rejection and to more clearly define the invention. More specifically, claim 1 has been amended to provide proper antecedent basis for all of the terms, to incorporate the limitations of claim 15, which has been cancelled, and to more clearly define the invention and the interrelationship between the claimed arrangement of a pouch and a needle set.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-14 and 16-22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite is respectfully requested. It is submitted that the above amendments overcome all of the Examiner's specific objections to claim 1 as well as correcting any such informalities found in the dependent claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection is requested.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 6-8, 11-16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the patent to Haile is respectfully requested.

As indicated above, independent claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of claim 15 and to clearly recite that the invention is a combination of a set of knitting machine needles and a needle pouch dimensionally to conform to the set of needles. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to positively recite the knitting machine needles, i.e. needle (5) comprising a shaft (7) provided with a hook (8) at one end and an opposite end portion (9) carrying a butt (11), and with the

needle having planar side surfaces as is conventional for machine knitting needles. Claim 1 has further been amended to recite that the pouch (18) is dimensional such that it tightly holds the set (6) knitting needles (5) so that the needles are essentially clamped together by the closely fitting needle pouch. Moreover, claim 1 specifically recites that the pouch (18) holds the knitting needles (5) of the needle set in parallel relationship with abutting surfaces in alignment, while the pins (9) are free to be grasped by hand. Such an arrangement, i.e. a needle pouch containing a set of machine needles with the needles being essentially cramped together by the dimensions of the pouch, is not taught by the Haile reference or any of the other cited references.

It should be noted that the features newly added to claim 1 are important from a technical point of view, particularly because the manufacture producing this arrangement desires to produce needle sets with different numbers of needles, without having to vary the outer dimensions of the material used to produce the pouch to accommodate needle sets with different numbers of needles. That is, needle sets comprising a small number of needles are rather narrow, while needle sets comprising a large number of needles form a relative broad block. According to the present, invention the pouch has the same relative outer dimensions but the actual opening of the pouch containing the needles is dimensioned to conform to the specific width of the needle set by varying the width of the connected side of strips (21) and (22), by glue. That is, the connection zones extend from the edge of the blank adjacent to the respective outer needles of the needle set. As a result, the pouch fits lightly around the needle set, clamping the needles firmly together to form a relatively firm needle block, and this is true no matter how large the number of

needles. Smaller numbers of needles require broader connection zones (21) and (22), while larger numbers of needles require smaller connection zones (21) and (22). As a result of this tight clamping of the needles of the needle set due to the dimensions of the pouch, there is no risk that the needles of a smaller set to lay irregularly within the pouch. Note that irregular arrangement of the needles in the pouch would increase the risk of damage to the needles during transport and upon pulling them out of the pouch.

The patent to Haile discloses a needle pouch for conventional sewing needles, i.e. not machine knitting needles. In this arrangement, the needles which do not have the claimed shape, are simply inserted into the compartment of the needle pouch, which pouch does contain some general similarities to the pouch according to the present invention. However, there is no teaching of the connection zones which form the pouch there between, with the dimensions of the pouch being such that the knitting needles of the set are essentially clamped together by the pouch itself. Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 1, and consequently claims 2, 4, 6-8, 11, 14, 16 and 19 dependent thereon are allowable over the Haile reference under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b).

It should be noted that at least certain of the claims more specifically define features of the pouch not taught by the Haile patent. For example, claim 13 more specifically defines the relationship between the connecting regions in the pouch, while claim 14 specifically recites that the width of the pouch equals the width of the needle set. Such features, clearly not taught by the Haile patent, and accordingly for these additional reasons, claims 13 and 14 are allowable over the Haile patent under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

The rejection of claims 1-3, 6-8, 10, 13 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the patent Hankins has been noted. Since claim 15, which is now incorporated into claim 1, was not contained in this ground of rejection, it is submitted that this ground of rejection is now moot and need not be discussed further.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-3, 5-9, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the patent McGrane is respectfully requested. The patent by McGrane does disclose a package for machine knitting needles. According to this patent, a paper blank as shown in Figure 3 is provided and then the portions 5 and 6 are folded and overlapped, with the overlapping portion, i.e. portion 6, being connected at its edge to the top of the folded portion 5. There is no teaching or suggestion in this patent that the pouch should have dimensions which conform to the size of the needle set in order to maintain the needles in their aligned clamped position. While this patent does recognize that it is desirable to keep the set of needles in their aligned fashion, and provides the flaps 11 to attempt to provide the alignment, this is not the same as forming the pouch with dimensions to conform to the set thus provides this function as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, for this reason, it is submitted that claim 1, and consequently claims 3, 5, 9, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19 dependent therein are allowable over the McGrane patent under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

The rejection of claims 5 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Haile and Hankins patent, has been noted. These claims are each dependent on claim 1, and accordingly are allowable over the Haile and Hankins patents for at least the same reasons as discussed above with regard to claim 1.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 12, 17 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Haile and Hankins patent as applied to claim 1 in further view of the patent to Minton et al. has been noted. In this ground of rejection, the Minton patent is cited simply to show them providing an adhering tab to connect the cover and crimping along the edges are known in general package art. However, this patent does not overcome the basic deficiencies of the Haile and Hankins patents as discussed above with regard to claim 1 from which each of these claims depends. Accordingly, it is submitted that claims 12, 17 and 18 are allowable over the cited combination of references under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) for at least the same reasons as discussed above with regard to claim 1.

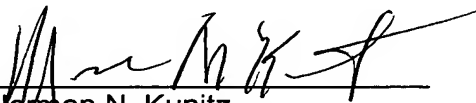
Reconsideration of rejection of claims 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over the prior art applied to claim 1 and further in view of the patent to Pavel et al. which was cited simply to show that is known in the art to provide a plastic box for storing a plurality of needle packages. The Pavel et al. reference does not overcome the basic deficiency of the prior art applied to claim 1 from which each of these claims depend from. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 20-22 are allowable over the cited combination of references under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) for at least the same reasons as discussed above with regard to claim 1.

In view of the above amendments, and for the above stated reasons, it is submitted that each of claims 1-14 and 16-22 is allowable over the prior art of record and is in condition for allowance. Such action and the passing of the claims is requested.

If the Examiner is of the opinion that the prosecution of the application would be advanced by a personal interview, the Examiner is invited to telephone undersigned counsel to arrange for such an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

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